

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 12591 281201Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 HA-05 /075 W
-----021954 281236Z /20

P R 281111Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5224
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 12591

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: BEGUM BHUTTO DETAINED

REF: A) ISLAMABAD 12567 B) ISLAMABAD 12306

1. AS ANEICIPATED, BEGUM NUSRAT BHUTTO WIFE OF THE FORMER
PM AND ACTING CHAIRMAN (SIC) OF THE PPP, HAS BEEN DETAINED
BY THE MARTIAL LAW AUTHORITIES UNTIL JANUARY 10. THE ACTION

PREVENTED BEGUM BHUTTO, STILL IN A LAHORE HOSPITAL RECOVERING
FROM THE INJURY SHE SUFFERED IN THE SCUFFLE AT THE CRICKET
MATCH ON DECEMBER 16 (REFTEL B) FROM HOLDING A PLANNED
PRESS CONFERENCE DECEMBER 27.

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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 12591 281201Z

2. THE MLA'S MOVE, LIKE ITS EXTENSION OF DAUGHTER BENAZIR'S
HOUSE ARREST (REFTEL A), IS AIMED AT KEEPING THE BHUTTO
DUO OUT OF CIRCULATION UNTIL AFTER THE PPP'S SCHEDULED
JANUARY 5, "DEMOCRACY DAY". BEGUM BHUTTO HAD, DECEMBER 27,
CANCELLED HER TOUR OF THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE
(REFTAL A) OSTENSIBLY FOR "REASONS OF HEALTH", ALTHOUGH SHE

MAY HAVE HAD ADVANCE WARNING OF THE MLA'S IMPENDING ACTION AND SOUGHT TO IMPROVE HER "MARTYR'S" IMAGE BY HAVING THE DETENTION TAKE PLACE WHILE SHE IS STILL IN HOSPITAL.

3. ELSEWHERE THE MLA CONTINUES WITH ITS SELECTIVE CARROT AND STICK APPROACH TO ARRESTS AND RELEASES OF THOSE INVOLVED IN PRO-BHUTTO DEMONSTRATIONS. IN KARACHI, WHERE SOME PROTESTS HAVE LED TO BUS BURNINGS, THE AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY STRICT, WITH LASHES AND A PERIOD OF RIGOROUS IMPRISONMENT A STANDARD PUNISHMENT FOR THOSE CHARGED WITH FOMENTING VIOLENCE. IN PINDI, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MLA HAS DISPLAYED A MORE MAGNANIMOUS FACE. THE URDU PRESS REPORTS DECEMBER 28, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT 10 MORE PPP WORKERS WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN PINDI LAST WEEK IN CONNECTION WITH PRO-BHUTTO DEMONSTRATIONS THERE HAVE BEEN RELEASED UNCONDITIONALLY, BRINGING THE TOTAL RELEASED TO 40 (REFTEL A).

4. THE PRESS REPORTS MEANWHILE THAT CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR (CMLA) ZIA IS PLANNING TO TOUR THE NWFP ON JANUARY 1ST AND 2ND. HE WILL THEN PROCEED TO KARACHI ON JANUARY 3. HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ISLAMA12591
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770483-0104
Format: TEL
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771213/aaaaakcw.tel
Line Count: 83
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 38015efc-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ISLAMABAD 12567, 77 ISLAMABAD 12306
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 122571
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BEGUM BHUTTO DETAINED
TAGS: PINT, PK, (BHUTTO, BEGUM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/38015efc-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009